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Plant Sanctuaries.

ELIZABETH G. BRITTON.

Since the Audubon Society began founding its *Bird Sanctuaries* there has been an increasing sentiment among those interested in the conservation of wild life to do the same for plants. The Ecological Society of America has attempted to get together all the information available concerning native plants needing protection and the localities where they are still abundant in their natural conditions. This information has not yet been made public, but in a brief report published in *Science* on May 6th, 1921, the statement is made that even in our National Parks no special effort is being made to maintain them as natural areas and that science has left the general public, who look upon them mainly as recreation parks, quite uninformed as to the advantages of *biological* studies in these National Parks. Some of the members of the American Association of Park Superintendents have also been interested in the preservation of our native plants in places where it is possible and are advocating their planting as food and shelter for birds and animals. The various Garden Clubs of the United States are also advocating the planting and cultivating of many of our native plants and creating a demand among dealers for seeds and roots.

The ferns are sharing in the general interest and some of them have become commercialized and are becoming rare or extinct in consequence. Probably the most dangerous enemy of the ferns is fire. Next to fire, transplanting into unsuitable localities where they promptly die, causes the destruction of many. Automobile parties come in from the country laden with cinnamon and other ferns, plant them in sunny dry places and repeat the experiment with other ferns, indefinitely. The use of native ferns for table decoration

should also be discouraged; perhaps the least harmful is the gathering of "*lace-ferns*" to supply the florists, for in this case the roots are not disturbed and the plant has a chance to grow another year. We have grown, very successfully, a colony of the Ostrich Fern on the shady side of the house, where it has multiplied and spread by long root-stocks.

WILD FLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA,
NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN.

The Climbing Fern in the Vicinity of Hartford.

C. A. WEATHERBY.

This story is in the nature of an obituary. After having survived fire and all the natural dangers to which a plant is exposed and the further perils incident to being a favorite of fashion, the climbing fern, once the chief feature, fern-wise, of this region and so remarkably common here, for it, that one of its names is the "Hartford fern," seems now doomed to early extinction through the clearing of its habitat for agricultural purposes.

There are several reasons why the climbing fern is of especial interest. The first is, that it, alone among the native ferns of the United States, does climb. Its slender, but tough, brown stems, twining over the bushes, and its rather pale green leaves, shaped somewhat like a hand with the fingers out-spread, give it a wholly unique appearance. It is the last of our northeastern ferns to begin growth in the spring and to come to maturity. The accompanying photograph was taken well into the summer, yet the summit of the stem is not yet fully uncoiled. The graceful fruiting panicles which appear above the leaves in late summer, are not ripe till the end of September. The climbing fern and its queer relative, the curly grass, are the only representatives of their family, the *Schizaeaceae*, native in